

Message Text

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14

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAJ-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-19 OMB-01 IO-14 DRC-01

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R 191840Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9452

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 7395

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, NATO, BE

SUBJECT: BELGIAN REACTION TO NATOMIN DECEMBER 1973; BURDENSARING

1. SUMMARY. BELGIANS PLEASED IN GENERAL WITH RESULTS OF RECENT
NATO MINISTERIAL, PARTICULARLY SECRETARY'S FRANKNESS AND HIS
PROPOSAL FOR MEETINGS OF NATO POLITICAL DIRECTORS. FONOFF SEES
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NEED FOR GREATER EUROPEAN UNITY AS A PREREQUISITE TO IMPROVED

TRANSATLANTIC CONSULTATIONS AND BELIEVES EUROPEAN DEFENSE ORGANIZATION MUST REMAIN WITHIN NATO FRAMEWORK. (EMBASSY BELIEVES BOTH VIEWS CONSTITUTE REACTION TO RECENT STATEMENTS BY JOBERT.) FINALLY , BELGIANS BELIEVE MULTILATERAL SOLUTION TO US BOP PROBLEM IS NOT POSSIBLE AND ARE WILLING TO EXAMINE BILATERAL OFFSET SCHEME WITH THE US. REQUEST GUIDANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. CHIEF OF FONOFF WESTERN ORGANIZATIONS DEPARTMENT (VAN DE KERCKHOVE) TOLD US ON DECEMBER 18 THAT POLITICAL DIRECTOR DAVIGNON'S REPORTING CABLE TO BELGIAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS ON THE DECEMBER 10-11 NATO MINISTERIAL SPOKE IN FAVORABLE TERMS OF THE FRANK AND USEFUL EXCHANGE THAT TOOK PLACE AT THE MEETING. DAVIGNON REPORTEDLY WAS ESPECIALLY GRATIFIED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER'S CANDOR, BOTH IN HIS GENERAL STATEMENT AND HIS OTHER INTERVENTIONS. VAN DE KERCKHOVE SAID THAT FONOFF GENERALLY WOULD SHY AWAY FROM EXTREME BELGIAN PRESS CHARACTERIZATIONS (BRUSSELS 7263 NOTAL) OF FIRST DAY'S SESSION (ALLIANCE IN DANGER) AND FINAL OUTCOME (FULL US-EUROPEAN RECONCILIATION).

3. ACCORDING TO VAN DE KERCKHOVE, DAVIGNON WELCOMES THE SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTATIONS AMONG THE POLITICAL DIRECTORS OF THE FIFTEEN, AS LONG AS THERE WAS NO INTENTION TO SUGGEST SUCH CONSULTATIONS AS A DEVICE FOR DEALING WITH CRISIS SITUATIONS, A TASK BETTER HANDLED BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES IN PLACE AND AVAILABLE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE. VAN DE KERCKHOVE SAID THAT FOUR MEETINGS OF THE POLITICAL DIRECTORS A YEAR SEEMS REASONABLE BUT THAT THESE SHOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE AUTHORITY OF THE COUNCIL IN PERMANENT SESSION. HE ADDED THAT "SOME" PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES DID NOT GREET THE SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL WITH JOY (A REPORT ALSO CARRIED IN THE DECEMBER 14 EDITION OF "ATLANTIC NEWS").

4. WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIC, VAN DE KERCKHOVE SAID THAT TWO LESSONS COULD BE DRAWN FROM THE MINISTERIAL WITH REGARD TO THE FUTURE OF EUROPE. FIRST OF ALL, TRULY USEFUL TRANSATLANTIC CONSULTATIONS COULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL EUROPE WAS UNITED AND ABLE TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE. SECONDLY, AN AUTONOMOUS EUROPEAN DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY IN THE NATO FRAMEWORK. CONFIDENTIAL

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(COMMENT: WE JUDGE THE FIRST POINT TO BE AN REFLECTION OF BELGIAN CHAGRIN OVER JOBERT'S FREE USE OF THE EDITORIAL "WE", I.E., WE EUROPEANS, IN HIS INTERVENTION ABOUT THE US-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR AND THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. THE SECOND REMARK IS CLEARLY A REACTION TO JOBERT'S RECENT REFERENCES TO THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS AND A POSSIBLE ROLE FOR THE WEU IN FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS. END COMMENT.)

5. EMBOFF INQUIRED INTO SIGNIFICANCE OF STATEMENTS BY MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE VANDEN BOEYNANTS (IN THE DPC) AND FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE (IN THE NAC) TO THE EFFECT THAT BELGIUM IS PREPARED TO SETTLE ITS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SURPLUS ON MILITARY ACCOUNT ON A BILATERAL US-BELGIAN BASIS. EMBOFF RECALLED THAT THE US CALL FOR MULTILATERAL EFFORT IS BASED IN PART ON THE NEED FOR ALL ALLIES TO RECOGNIZE THAT ALLIED DEFENSE IS INDIVISIBLE. VAN DE KERCKHOVE REPEATED VAN ELSLANDE'S STATEMENT THAT A MULTILATERAL SOLUTION IS CERTAINLY PREFERABLE BUT NOT POSSIBLE IN THE NEAR TERM. EXPLAINING HOW THIS CONCLUSION WAS REACHED, VAN DE KERCKHOVE CITED THE RIGID OPPOSITION OF THE BRITISH AND THE LIKELIHOOD THAT OTHERS AS WELL WILL REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE IN A MULTILATERAL EXERCISE. THEREFORE, BELGIUM IS WILLING TO EXAMINE BILATERALLY THE US-BELGIAN BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SITUATION ON MILITARY ACCOUNT. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT AGREEMENT HAS YET TO BE REACHED ON THE FIGURES, AND HE SUGGESTED THAT THIS MIGHT BEST BE ACCOMPLISHED BY A BILATERAL MEETING OF EXPERTS.

VAN DE KERCKHOVE ADDED THAT BELGIUM IS READY TO INCREASE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO NATO BUDGETS IN CONCERT WITH OTHER ALLIES, AS A WAY OF HELPING THE US TO REDUCE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THESE BUDGETS.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: IT IS CERTAINLY NOT LOST ON THE BELGIANS THAT A BILATERAL OFFSET ARRANGEMENT, EVEN IF CALCULATED ON THE BASIS OF FIGURES SUBMITTED BY THE US, WOULD INVOLVE A CONSIDERABLY SMALLER OUTLAY THAN WOULD BE REQUIRED OF BELGIUM UNDER A MULTILATERAL SCHEME SUCH AS THE US ILLUSTRATIVE PROPOSAL TABLED AT NATO ON NOVEMBER 29. (USNATO 5794.) WHILE WE CONTINUE TO IMPRESS UPON OUR CONTACTS OUR STRONG PREFERENCE FOR A MULTILATERAL APPROACH, WE WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE ON ANY MORE SPECIFIC RESPONSE
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WASHINGTON WOULD LIKE US TO MAKE TO THE BILATERAL PROPOSAL, WHICH BELGIANS ARE LIABLE TO RAISE AGAIN, AS WELL AS TO THE SUGGESTION FLOATED BY VAN DE KERCKHOVE FOR A BILATERAL EXPERTS MEETING.

EMBASSY HAS COMMENTED IN BRUSSELS 6856 (NOTAL) ON BELGIAN CONCERN AT UNILATERAL US DEFINITION OF JACKSON-NUNN BOP DEFICIT.
STRAUSZ-HUPE

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NNN

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